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THE Unexplained

MYSTERIES OF MIND SPACE & TIME

115

Pub ghosts
The dowser and the dream
Lemuria: a likely story?
The doom boom
Edgar Cayce

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THE Unexplained
MYSTERIES OF MIND SPACE & TIME

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In next week's issue
Over 50 years after the controversial **Cottingley fairies** pictures were taken by two Yorkshire girls we publish fascinating new evidence about what really happened. Do economic trends fulfil biblical prophecies about the coming of Armageddon? in **End times** we look at the beliefs of those for whom every world event heralds the end. Today spoon bending is 'in' and, on the whole, table tilting 'out'; what dictates the current fashion in the paranormal? See **Weirdness à la mode**. Continuing **Alien cats** we travel to Scotland to investigate alleged sightings of anomalous big cats. And we begin a series on **Earth lights**, those mysterious balls of fire and flying lights that are often mistaken for UFOs, but that seem to be caused by deep shifts inside the Earth
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The doom boom

Prophecies of doom are in full spate – perhaps prompted by the approach of the year 2000, with its suggestions of the Christian Millennium. JENNY RANDLES surveys some warnings that have come through paranormal channels

'IN GREAT BRITAIN THERE WERE three main detonations – one in Hammersmith, west London, one in Manchester, and one in Hull. The London blast details were as follows. Date and time of detonation: Wednesday September 11, 1980, 09.16 hours; 50 per cent survival rate = 2.5-mile [4-kilometre] radius; type of detonation: 20 megatonne fission ICBM airburst at approx. height 7800 feet [2400 metres].'

So wrote investigator Andy Collins in one of the strangest documents in the history of paranormal research. He entitled his paper *The past three years (1978–1981)* – and it was published during 1978. It concerned a psychic who was given the pseudonym Paul Grant. He was put under hypnosis, progressed to a point three years in the future and told to describe his 'memories' of the intervening period. Collins wrote up the results and gave copies to a few selected researchers so that their accuracy could be checked.

The nuclear Armageddon of which the events in London formed a part did not arrive on schedule – fortunately. But the few people in possession of these predictions gave careful thought to their movements on 11 September 1980. There was no sense in taking any chances!

The three-year period, as it was foreseen by Paul Grant, was filled with war, pestilence and fantastic events that could form the plot of a science-fiction film. It was almost totally in error. On the whole it was similar to fantasies produced in other progression experiments, and expresses the fear that has gripped mankind ever since the detonation of nuclear devices over Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. The imminence of the 'end times' seems all too credible now.

Yet in the decades since that first use of nuclear weapons, 'war has reigned merrily' (to borrow a phrase from the 16th-century French prophet Nostradamus), and yet nuclear bombs have never been employed. It becomes more permissible to hope that they might never be used. A whole generation has grown up with the bomb. Our nuclear fears should be decreasing from their high point in the early post-war years. Yet the fact seems to be that they are not so doing – and perhaps there is a paranormal explanation for this.

'Doomsday' has become big business. The best-selling writer Charles Berlitz has even turned his attention away from more mundane matters, such as crashed spaceships and pickled little green men, to write a

The Riders of the Apocalypse by Vasco Taskovski depicts the sinister horsemen of the book of Revelation as machine-like beings with mechanised weapons, wreaking destruction on a cowed and regimented mass of humanity. The fearsome battles marking the last days of the present order are a major strand in many prophecies. Beyond these horrors a golden age awaits humanity – or the chosen few who survive

book that not only suggests a deadline of 1999 for doomsday but offers us a choice of endings, from self-inflicted destruction – perhaps by means of Earth-splitting devices – to pole shifts and ice ages.

Paul Grant seems to have been aware of the range of methods by which we could commit planetary suicide. In his scenario the Soviet Union had unleashed the Third World War after a conflict with China had got out of hand. But then, realising she was beaten,

> in a last desperate attempt, the Soviet Union decided to finish the situation completely by using a 'Doomsday' bomb. This was a large orbiting satellite, the size of Skylab. It was released from its orbit, after which it spiralled slowly towards its target: a large fault-line in north-east Africa. The detonation was immense – 500 megatonnes – and it appeared to be a cobalt-salted device. The idea was to destroy as much of the planet as possible. They knew that everybody would die anyway, so they thought they would speed up the process. This was detonated during December 1980 and produced horrific effects.

Nobody can say that Paul did not have a vivid imagination under hypnosis!

This tendency to foresee doom for mankind is reflected in a growing number of alleged communications made by paranormal means. For example, Uri Geller and his associate Andrija Puharich worked together to receive messages via automatic writing and telepathy. Their source was said to be 'the Nine', powerful intelligences that not only provided Geller's powers but were to use a small band gathered together by Puharich as instruments in the prevention of Armageddon. The team raced around the world in a fantastic attempt to use their psychic powers to avert war and the world's destruction by pole shift. They claim that they succeeded; and since the world is still here, who can argue with them?

In 1978 a psychic, 'Paul Grant', published his predictions, made under hypnosis, for the years 1978 to 1981. The prophecies were dominated by a nuclear holocaust, which was to be followed by the arrival of help from space people. Grant foresaw the destruction of cities such as London by hydrogen bombs (top), each of which could dwarf the atomic bomb that levelled Nagasaki (above). This was supposed to happen on 11 September 1980 – but on that day London went peacefully about its business

It is significant that this 'intelligence' (whether external or a construct of Geller's mind) should be so concerned about the fate of the Earth. This is not an isolated instance. Other psychic groups believe they are being worked hard by unseen intelligences, to the greater good of the world. Even when Geller quarrelled with Puharich and left, the latter had no difficulty in bringing together a fresh team of disciples to carry on the work.

It is not surprising that UFO contacts, a central type of paranormal experience in modern times, should display the same pattern. A typical case occurred in the Dolomite mountains of Italy in July 1968. A man was sleeping in a car parked on a lonely road. Waking, he got out of the car; he could smell burning. Nearby he saw a large disc and a

figure in a tight suit with a glass dome on his head. The alien 'spoke' to him telepathically and told him that he came from a far distant galaxy. The frightened witness actually pricked himself to prove he was awake. The extra-terrestrial told him of how our planet was facing imminent destruction by a pole shift, followed by enormous crustal cracking. After giving this warning, the alien flew back to the comparative safety of his distant home.

The apocalyptic trends in paranormal events mirror wider tendencies that appear in many other guises. For example, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) now has a larger following than ever before. Why, after years of comparative obscurity, has it suddenly re-emerged? Why do so many people feel they must do something to resist the machinations of our politicians?

The last few years have also seen a dramatic rise in the number of books, fictional and otherwise, that depict the war that so many people now dread. It is widely seen as being catastrophic.

Popular music may respond even more sensitively to the mood of society. Song lyrics show this concern: many talk of the coming end. These are not anti-nuclear cries of the sort that appeared during CND's original popularity in the 1950s. The modern lyrics seem much more deeply felt. Justin Haywood, for example, sings of being 'frightened for our children' and of fearing that sunshine will turn to rain 'when the final night is over'. Barclay James Harvest sing of a survivor of the nuclear holocaust who, after 'the last green falls', rubs his eyes and looks around, but finds that there is nothing left at all, anywhere.

Interestingly, one trend in these apocalyptic themes is to bring in the UFO contactee message. Extra-terrestrial saviours are seen as Earth's last hope; in one of his lyrics Al Stewart begs the 'silvery ships' to reach down from the stars.

One can even find signs of forebodings of war in the movements of human population. The British Census of 1981 showed a mass exodus from traditional residential areas in cities. The migrants dispersed, so that there were very few areas of dramatic expansion. But one area to which people did move was mid Wales, even though amenities there are few. A map published at around the same time shows probable targets for nuclear destruction in the event of war. It shows only a few parts of the country as emerging relatively unscathed. One is mid Wales.

The anti-nuclear movement experienced a rebirth in countries around the world in the early 1980s. Alongside this activism a more fatalistic preoccupation with the prospect of Armageddon manifested itself in doom laden songs and stories

A warning from space. In the Dolomite mountains of northern Italy in July 1968, a space being dressed in classic fashion emerged from a UFO. His telepathic message to the frightened witness referred to one of the standard range of planetary disasters – a pole shift. The alien proved to be no more successful at prophecy than his terrestrial counterparts, however

Refugees from other worlds

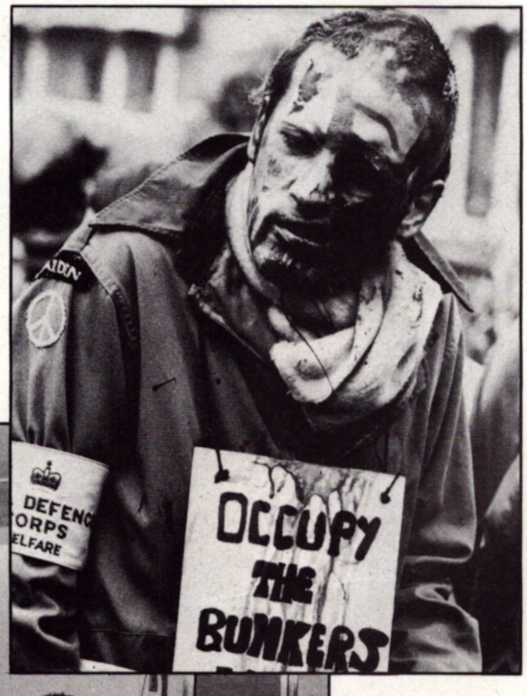
The notion of apocalypse, in an altered form, seems to underlie the story of the Janos people, reported by the ufologist Frank Johnson. An English family believe that in June 1978 they were taken on board a UFO and taught about the distant planet Janos. For unknown reasons, ancient inhabitants of Europe migrated to Janos thousands of years ago. But this beautiful planet was to be destroyed by the disintegration of one of its twin moons, Saton. The event was long foreseen, and a fleet of spaceships began the evacuation of the planet. But Saton broke up sooner than expected because of damage caused by Janos spaceships. Much of the population of Janos was trapped in underground shelters as the surface was bombarded by rock fragments. These meteoric impacts caused the nuclear power stations on the planet to explode, and radioactivity brought a lingering death to the trapped people. The survivors in the orbiting space fleet set out for their old home, the Earth. They are now waiting somewhere in the solar system, hoping to be allowed refuge somewhere on Earth in exchange for the benefits of their technological knowledge and their wisdom. Frank Johnson suggests that the interior of South America, Australia or Canada might be set aside for them.

The Janos saga combines several familiar elements of the literature of UFO encounters and apocalypse – the idyllic life of the sky people, the disaster brought on by technological hubris – but now salvation is sought, not offered.

A badge worn on a Janos spacewoman's belt, showing a spacecraft

Could it be that on a deep level the British people are aware of this and are choosing where to live to maximise their chances of survival?

In view of all these tendencies it is not too surprising that interest in 'end time' prophecies is booming. Perhaps the most famous of these are the over 900 enigmatic verses that came from the pen of Michel de Nostredame, or Nostradamus, in the 16th century. So vague are these that they can often be applied to different historical events, but some devotees claim that such inventions as aeroplanes and submarines are foretold in them.



The psychic 'Paul Grant' predicted that key people – including himself – would be protected from the coming global disaster in huge underground complexes. But the only bunkers that have been made public in Britain (below left) are cramped quarters intended to house civil servants – the true elect who will survive Armageddon, as this anti-nuclear demonstrator (left) protests

The prophecies that seemingly are yet to be fulfilled paint a picture of destruction throughout the world.

More modern prophets have made similar claims. Edgar Cayce, who worked in the early decades of this century, spoke of planetary upheavals in the last quarter of the 20th century, in which whole cities will be sunk. Jeanne Dixon, America's most famous seer, has also claimed to have had a vision in which a child born somewhere in the Middle

East during February 1962 would become of great importance to the future of the world. She further talks of war in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and of catastrophic destruction. But it is hard to know how much these people are influenced by their knowledge of 'end times' prophecies by Nostradamus and other seers, and how much they are tapping some source of knowledge about the near future – on which they superimpose slightly different personal interpretations.

Interestingly, some of the claims of Gaynor Sunderland, a Welsh contactee (see page 1188), coincide with those of Jeanne Dixon. She too says she was given a vision of a child born in the Middle East during the early 1960s who will prove to be of world importance. She claims never to have heard of Jeanne Dixon.

An element common to many of the claimed precognitions that have been reported throughout the world is the rescuing of an élite group. Paul Grant featured it in his 'memory':

> The British government had realised that certain people involved with certain aspects of UFO research had information pertaining seemingly to the future, and would be of great use to them . . . at which point it was decided to start to get these people together.

Paul 'saw' a massive underground complex to which these people were taken. He even learned the names of the government officials who ran it. He, of course, was among the important people who went there.

There is evidence that major disasters such as air crashes or hotel fires cast a hazy shadow before them. After the tragedy at Aberfan, south Wales, in 1966, when a wet slag tip subsided onto a school packed with children, studies showed that there had been premonitions of this event (see page 110). Some came in the form of dreams and psychic visions, and were either straightforward images of the disaster, or consisted of relevant images mixed in with other material. Others appeared in children's drawings.

If the human mind is indeed capable of picking up faint signals from future events, and subconsciously adapting our behaviour accordingly, what might it do when faced with a stimulus as powerful as an approaching nuclear catastrophe? It seems reasonable to suggest that Armageddon would trigger numerous 'psychic alarm bells' that would manifest themselves in many different ways. And one can argue that, unfortunately, this is just what we have now.

The Bible feeds the fears of many modern prophets of doom. *See page 2314*

The rock band Barclay James Harvest stage a suitably apocalyptic display to match the mood of a song concerned with nuclear doom. Is the streak of foreboding that runs through popular books and song lyrics a product of the collective imagination – or of collective premonition?

surface of the Indian Ocean, which extended along the South of Asia, as it is at present (and probably in direct connection with it), towards the east, as far as Further India and the Sunda Islands; towards the west as far as Madagascar and the southeastern shores of Africa.

We have already mentioned that many facts in animal and vegetable geography render the former existence of such a South Indian continent very probable. . . . By assuming this Lemuria to have been man's primeval home, we greatly facilitate the explanation of the geographical distribution of the human species by migration.

Alas for Haeckel, time and new theories soon provided more plausible explanations for the origins of Man and the distribution of the lemur. They should also have buried Lemuria. But by then the occultists had

Lemuria: a likely story?

Lemuria, one of the fabulous lost continents, was seriously sought by 19th-century naturalists, looking for the ancient home of the lemur. Since then, however, as ROY STEMMAN explains, Lemuria has become the exclusive property of the lunatic fringe

OF ALL THE LOST CONTINENT legends the story of Lemuria is the most preposterous. Yet it has its origins firmly based in 19th-century scientific speculation.

The possibility of a lost land was put forward as an explanation for the discovery of the lemur, a monkey-like mammal distantly related to Man, which was found in countries around the Indian Ocean. The problem was that some of these countries were so far apart that it seemed impossible for the tiny animals to have reached them across a wide expanse of ocean.

Charles Darwin's thesis *On the origin of species* had been published in 1859, and the supporters of evolution were in heated debate with those who believed God could put species wherever he wanted on our planet.

Some, like the German naturalist Ernst Heinrich Haeckel, were not only enthusiastic believers in the existence of the lost land – named Lemuria after the mammal that inspired the theory – they were even prepared to believe that it was the 'cradle of civilisation'. Haeckel wrote:

> There are a number of circumstances (especially chronological facts), which suggest that the primeval home of man was a continent now sunk below the

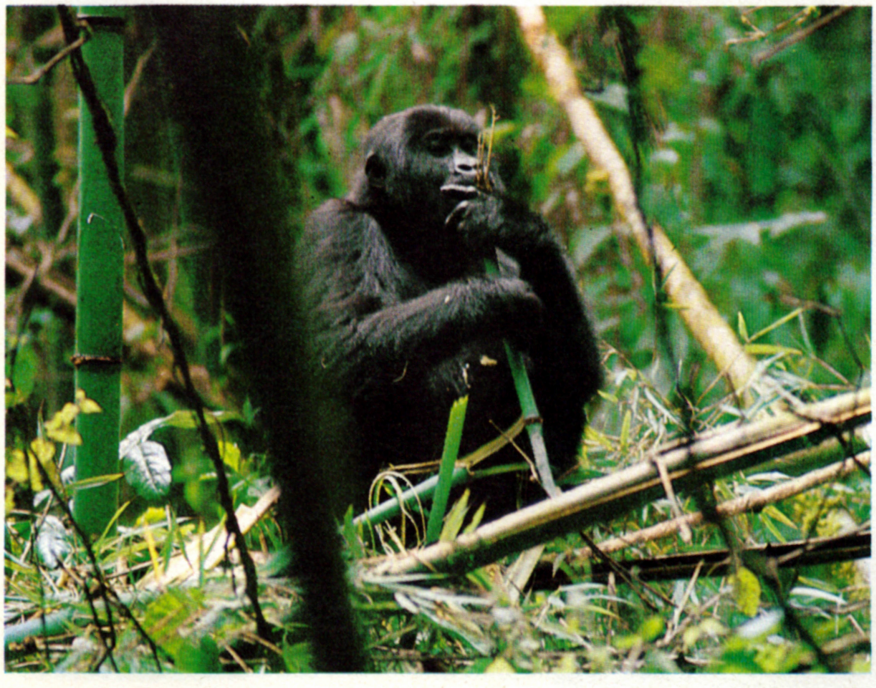
Above: Ernst Haeckel, the 19th-century German naturalist who believed Lemuria to have been 'the cradle of civilisation'

Survivors of Lemuria are hard to find today, although the monkey-like lemur (above left), which gave its name to the continent, still flourishes. Australian Aborigines (left) and the natives of Papua, New Guinea (below), are said to be the only remaining human survivors – although neither culture maintains a myth of Lemuria

latched onto the 'lost continent' as if it were a rich source of mystical knowledge – as they had done with Atlantis and Mu (see page 2246) – and scientific speculation was dismissed.

By 1888 Lemuria had the hefty support of the greatest of modern occultists, Madame Helena Blavatsky, a large and enigmatic woman who founded the Theosophical Society (see page 2061). In that year she published her book *The secret doctrine*, which stated her philosophy and allegedly contained ancient wisdom imparted to her, or so she claimed, by the Brotherhood of Mahatmas, a group of ethereal beings she believed to rule the world from Tibet.

Madame Blavatsky's book was said to be based on an ancient work, the *Book of Dyzan*, which the Mahatmas had, she claimed, shown her during their astral visits. It had been composed in Atlantis in the now forgotten Senzar language, and dealt with the histories of both Atlantis and Lemuria.



According to Madame Blavatsky's occult knowledge, Lemurians were the third 'root race', of which Earth is destined to have seven. But it was left to later Theosophists, notably W. Scott-Elliot, to elaborate on Lemurian history. First the Lemurians went through an egg-laying phase, then they bred sexually with beasts, resulting in today's great apes (above). Eventually they became Cro-Magnon man, some of whom were cave dwellers and may have painted the cave paintings at Altamira in northern Spain (top)

The secret doctrine was written in English, but that did not make it any easier to understand. For example:

> After great throes she cast off her old Three and put on her new Seven Skins, and stood in her first one. . . . The wheel whirled for 30 crores more. It constructed Rupas: Soft Stones that hardened, hard Plants that softened. Visible from invisible, Insects and small hives. . . .

According to the Mahatmas, the Earth is destined to have seven 'root' races. The first root race was invisible, the second just visible. The third were the Lemurians, huge ape-like creatures with no brains. Next came the Atlanteans, who were fully human but were destroyed by black magic. We are the fifth root race. The sixth will evolve from us and return to live on Lemuria. After the seventh and final root race appears, life is destined to leave Earth and start afresh on Mercury.

Madame Blavatsky's occult powers were able to bring to life the lost world of Lemuria. Some of its inhabitants had four arms; others had an eye in the back of their heads that gave them 'psychic vision'. They had no need for the spoken word since they used telepathy to communicate. According to Blavatsky the Lemurians lived in caves or holes in the ground and their continent occupied most of the southern hemisphere from the foot of the Himalayas to within a few degrees of the Antarctic Circle. When Lemuria was swept away more than 40 million years ago some of the inhabitants survived. Their descendants became Aborigines, Papuans and Hottentots.

The story unfolds

Fascinating though the Blavatsky account was – particularly to the Theosophists – it left much untold. This was remedied after Madame Blavatsky's death in 1891 by her successor, Annie Besant, and another leading Theosophist, W. Scott-Elliot, both of whom wrote at length about Lemuria and her inhabitants.

Scott-Elliot claimed that he received not only occult revelations from the 'Theosophical Masters' but also a set of maps showing critical stages of the world's evolution. These formed the basis of six world maps that were reproduced in his book *The story of Atlantis and the lost Lemuria*, which was published in 1896 and was still in print in 1982.

According to Scott-Elliot, the Manus – who supervise the Universe – chose Lemuria for the evolution of the third root race, but their first attempt to produce human life resulted in jelly-like creatures. In time, however, the Lemurians hardened and

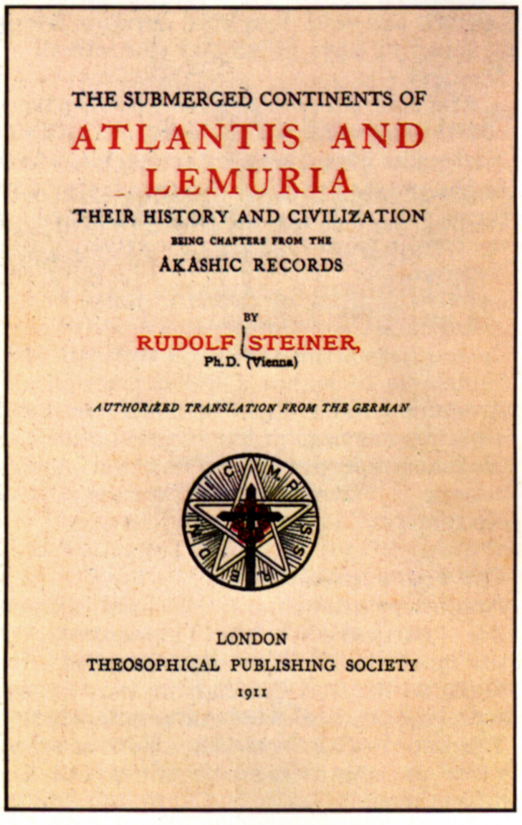
developed skeletons, so they were able to stand up.

They were between 12 and 15 feet (3.6 and 4.5 metres) tall, with flat faces, brown skins, protruding muzzles and no foreheads. Their eyes were set so far apart that they could see sideways as well as forwards. The third eye, at the back of their heads, now forms the pineal gland in our brains. The Lemurians' heels stuck out so far at the back that they could walk backwards or forwards, Scott-Elliot revealed, so the eye in the back of their heads was particularly useful.

Lemurian bestiality

To begin with the Lemurians were egg-laying hermaphrodites but, with the appearance of various sub-races, they evolved to reproduce as we do. During this period of sexual change, however, they bred with beasts. This resulted in today's great apes.

This offended some supernatural beings who were supposed to incarnate on Earth in



human bodies to help the evolution of the Lemurians. Fortunately for us, beings from Venus offered to take their place and taught them how to be immortal and to reincarnate.

Scott-Elliot's book is complex, dealing not only with the way in which the sub-races of each root race evolved but also with the geographical changes that influenced them, in particular the breaking up of Lemuria, as parts of the continent sank. A surviving peninsula became Atlantis, and the fourth root race appeared. As the creatures of this race evolved, they became whiter and smaller – until Cro-Magnon man appeared.

The Atlanteans, said Scott-Elliot, achieved much, including the creation of the banana. Their scientists produced bombs and even aircraft that were propelled by *vril* power (very strong willpower). Only the rich had these aircraft, which could fly at 100 miles per hour (160 km/h) at 1000 feet (300 metres). Curiously, the craft were even capable of vertical take-off using a technique similar to modern jump jets.

As if that were not enough, a new version of life on Lemuria appeared in 1923 from the pen of a former Theosophist, Rudolf Steiner. (He had left Blavatsky's occult society in 1907 to start his own, the Anthroposophical Society.) In his book *Cosmic memory: Atlantis and Lemuria* Steiner describes the Lemurians as feeble-minded but capable of lifting heavy weights by willpower. Apparently, during the period when they were egg-laying hermaphrodites, they managed with a single eye. When they discovered sex, however, their vision improved.

An end to bisexuality

While their souls dominated their bodies the Lemurians were bisexual, but when our planet entered a new stage of 'densification', and physical bodies became more important, this caused a division of the sexes.

Lemuria, it would seem from these accounts, was of interest only to students of the occult or people who were more gullible than the rest. But the lost continent became familiar to most people by the 1920s.

The man who was unwittingly responsible was a writer named Frederick Spencer Oliver. In 1894, under the name 'Phylos the Tibetan', he had written *A dweller on two planets*, an occult novel in which a Chinese named Quong is described as a Master living on Mount Shasta in northern California, USA, where sages had established a community to preserve the arcane wisdom of the

According to Rudolf Steiner, founder of the Anthroposophical Society and author of *Atlantis and Lemuria* (left), the Lemurians were feeble-minded but were capable of astonishing feats of PK. Scott-Elliot, however, believed that surviving Lemurians living on Atlantis invented bombs and vertical take-off aircraft, perhaps resembling a Harrier jump jet (above). The Lemurians continued to make headlines when an American reporter, Edward Lanser, claimed that they were living on Mount Shasta in northern California (right). He quoted 'the eminent scientist Professor Edgar Lucin Larkin', who often observed the shy Lemurian community through his telescope and described their buildings as rivalling the beauty of the Mayan temples (above right). But at the time Lanser's story appeared in print, Larkin had been dead for eight years – and the Lemurians, apparently taking advantage of an hereditary ability, became permanently invisible

ancients – including that of the Lemurians.

The book may not have had great popular appeal but it undoubtedly influenced another writer, Edward Lanser, a reporter. On 22 May 1932, Lanser made a sensational claim in the *Los Angeles Times Star*. The descendants of a race that had lived on Lemuria were now living on the slopes of Mount Shasta.

Lanser claimed to have learned about the Lemurians while travelling at night on a train that took him past the mountain on its way to Portland, Oregon. He noticed red and green lights on the mountain and was told by the guard that they were caused by Lemurians 'holding ceremonials'.

The intrepid reporter, sensing a scoop, set off on an expedition to Mount Shasta in search of the Lemurians. He reached the small town of Weed and spoke to others who, they claimed, had seen the strange lights and knew about the mystic village. But none had entered the settlement – or if they had they had not returned.

Larkin at Weed

Lanser, however, did find an expert on the Lemurian settlement, 'the eminent scientist Professor Edgar Lucin Larkin'. It seems that Larkin had been as close as any man dared to the secret community, placing a telescope on a promontory to observe its activities. Through the high-powered instrument he had seen a great temple, carved from marble and onyx and rivalling the beauty of Mayan temples. The Lemurians kept themselves to themselves, though the people of Weed occasionally met them. They were tall, friendly and noble-looking, with close-cropped hair and dressed in spotless white robes.

The Lemurians bought large quantities of sulphur, salt and lard in the shops of Weed, paying for them with gold nuggets that they mined on the mountain – all of which would, in normal circumstances, have inspired a thousand expeditions to Mount Shasta by more courageous explorers in search of the Lemurians. But Lanser's incredible story contained one major disappointment. The Lemurian descendants, who had been living in America for several hundred thousand years, possessed the 'secret power of the Tibetan masters'. They could blend with their surroundings, becoming invisible at will. They could also encircle their settlement with an 'invisible protective barrier' that prevented intruders getting in. This would, of course, explain why they had been able to live undetected for so long.

Having reached that point, most readers of the *Los Angeles Times Star* must have suspected that Lanser's story contained more fiction than fact. Subsequent investigation revealed that even his one eyewitness was not what he seemed. Professor Larkin was not an 'eminent scientist' as Lanser had claimed. He was, in reality, an elderly occultist who ran the Mount Lowe Observatory in California. Unlike its neighbour the great Mount Wilson Observatory, this was not a scientific institution. It was no more than a tourist attraction run by the Pacific Electric Railway, enabling visitors to see the stars through a small telescope. And Larkin – like the Lemurians – was not available for comment. He died in 1924, eight years before Edward Lanser's incredible story was published.

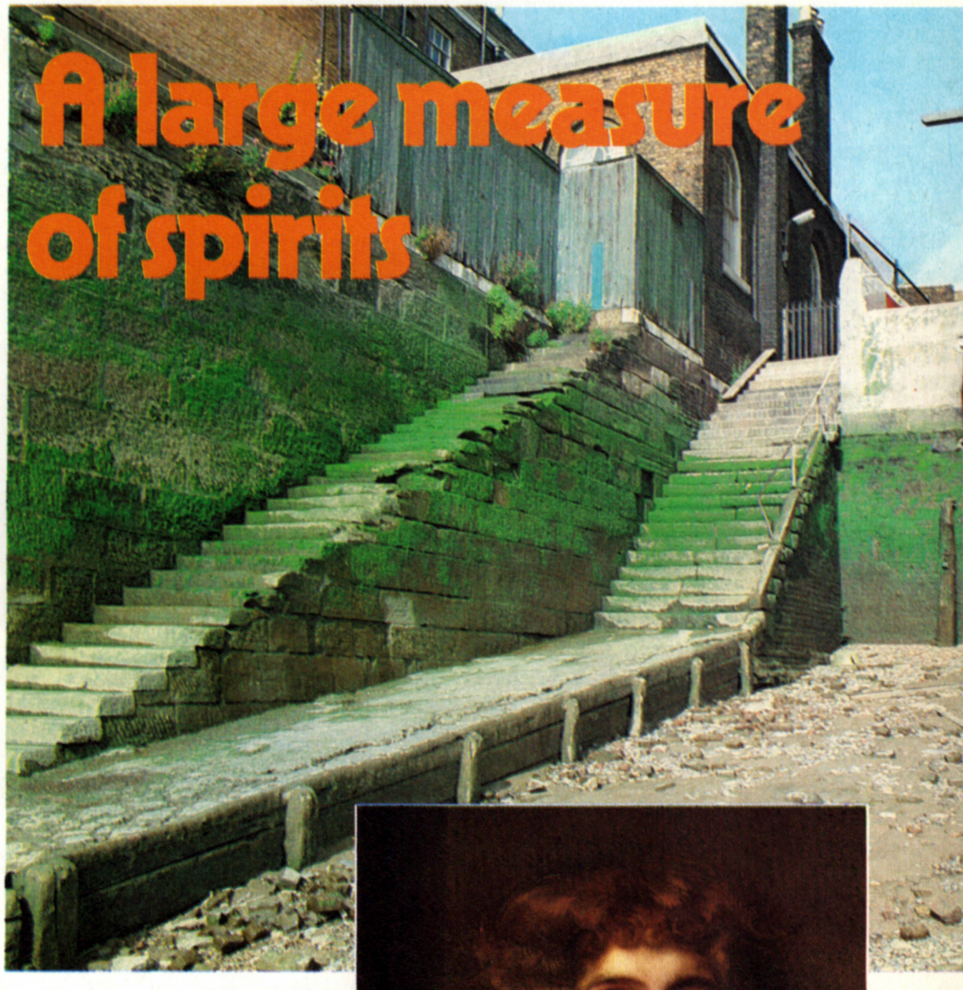
Of all the lost continents, Lemuria is the one that least deserves to be brought to the surface. Even the lowly lemur lives happily without it.

Further reading

H.P. Blavatsky, *The secret doctrine*, Theosophical Publishing House 1888
James Churchward, *The lost continent of Mu*, Paperback Library (New York) 1968
Rudolf Steiner, *Atlantis and Lemuria*, Anthroposophical Press 1923

A large measure of spirits

A potent mixture of murder, mayhem and a dash of legend enlivens the history of many English pubs and has produced plenty of phantoms to trouble ancient taverns. FRANK SMYTH recounts some intriguing tales of spirits that haunt historic inns



The infamous Lord Chief Justice Jeffreys (right) was captured on Old Wapping Stairs (above) behind the Town of Ramsgate pub when he was trying to escape to France in 1688. He died in prison before being brought to trial, but it is the stairs that his ghost haunts. It has been seen there by many people, including the Thames river police

THE PUBLIC HOUSE is not only one of the most popular institutions of the English way of life, but also one of the most haunted. In the mid 1970s, when writing the book *The English pub*, Michael Jackson and the author carried out a survey among the 'big six' brewery combines and the two dozen or so independent breweries that between them control most of the country's estimated 70,000 pubs. To a question concerning the number of pubs traditionally said to be haunted, the reply was rather surprising: every brewer claimed to have ghosts on his licensed premises. An independent brewer in the north boasted of having three haunted pubs (a quarter of the houses he then owned), while the mighty Bass-Charrington group said that their ghosts were 'too numerous to mention'. A West Country brewery said that 'about one in five' of their pubs had at one time or another been associated with supernatural phenomena. The prevailing tone of all the replies was one of quiet pride; ghosts after all are part of the national heritage and are usually good for business.

The public house is a unique institution found only in England, Wales and parts of Scotland. It is totally unlike the traditional bars and bothies of Scotland and Ireland, or the drinking places of America and Europe. The older pubs are quite as hallowed by time as the churches with which they often stand cheek-by-jowl (and have certainly overtaken them in popularity). It is therefore not surprising that many of them have acquired a reputation for being haunted. Nevertheless it is unwise, for obvious reasons, to take every pub ghost story at face value.

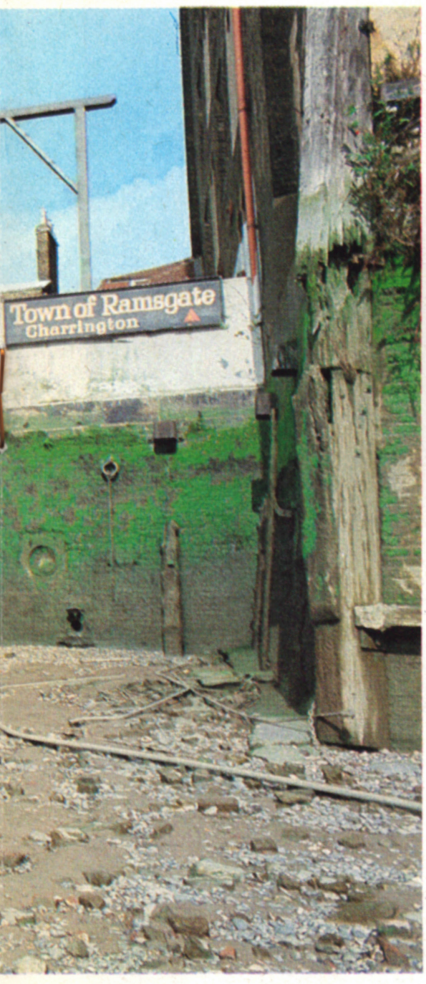
A case in point is the story of Madge Gill, the 'primitive' painter from London's East End, who died in the 1960s. One day in the 1930s she was sitting in a pub in Whitechapel (according to her own testimony) when she became aware of a ghost. This spirit said its name was 'Mirinarest', and urged her to draw pictures under its guidance. She subsequently produced hundreds of finely detailed and elaborate drawings, full of weird patterns and tormented faces. An exhibition of her 'spirit drawings' was held in a gallery in New Bond Street after her death.

'But,' asserted one of her former drinking companions, 'gin was the only spirit that moved her.'

Certainly the combined effects of alcohol and primitive lighting must have contributed to ghostly pub lore in days gone by; with a dash of authentic history the supernatural cocktail is complete. The tale of the lonely Marsden Grotto pub, on the north-east coast of England, provides an illustration.

Right: the Marsden Grotto pub, near which a gruesome incident occurred in the 18th century. Threatened with exposure by a colleague, a smuggler (who was using a cavern in the cliff as a base) imprisoned the would-be traitor in a tub suspended from the roof of the cavern, where he died. His wails are heard to this day by some who venture down the cliff lift to visit the pub below

The story goes that in 1782 a retired miner, appropriately named Jack the Blaster, widened the natural caverns in the 100-foot (30-metre) high limestone cliffs opposite Marsden Rock in order to use them as a base for smuggling operations. When threatened with betrayal by a colleague, with the equally appropriate name of John the Jibber, Jack rigged a tub on a pulley to the high roof of the caverns and kept John a prisoner in it, lowering him only occasionally for food. The motive behind this arrangement seems to



have been humane: to save murdering the would-be traitor. But he died in the tub, anyway. In 1850 an enterprising gamekeeper named Peter Allan saw the possibilities of the old smuggler's cave as a beer cellar and built the present inn onto it. But the pleasures of drinking were to be spoiled by the ghostly wails and groans coming from the caves, usually late at night. These can still be heard, it is said, and are attributed to the death torments of 'awd John, jibberin away'. But fast tides, a honeycombed cliff face and, perhaps, brown ale may also play a part in the phenomenon.

In rural communities where the inn has been a focal point of life for generations it tends to become a repository of local lore and legend. Tales are told and re-told, polished and embellished. The story of an inn on Dartmoor in Devon illustrates this.

In the late 1960s the novelist Gordon Williams rented a cottage on the edge of Dartmoor to research a novel. His 'local' was the Warren House Inn, high on the moor between Widecombe in the Moor and Moretonhampstead.

The inn, he was told, had once been haunted, but the ghosts had disappeared along with the practice of corpse transportation. Before Widecombe had a consecrated burial ground, bodies had been carried across the moor to the churchyard at Moretonhampstead for burial. Treacherous weather and deep snowfalls are a feature of moorland winters, and when the pall-bearers were defeated by such conditions they would leave the bodies, pickled in brine, in great cider vats in the inn's cellars to await the coming of spring. One local inhabitant told Williams that all this had happened 'in my grandfather's time' and that the innkeeper was 'fair troubled by the spirits' until a churchyard was opened in Widecombe.

Williams was intrigued by this story and checked it out in the British Library. He found that the tale was indeed based on fact: but the last 'corpse transportation' had taken place in 1134.

Apart from the influence of drink and legend, there remain several potent reasons why a pub should become the scene of a haunting. A phantom seeking the lost comforts of life on earth could do worse than frequent an inn. And if ghosts are merely psychic 'replays' of cataclysmic events, the pub is certainly exposed over the years to a far more varied spectrum of human emotions than, say, the village church. In many instances a pub haunting is a product of murder and mayhem. Two of London's most famous haunted pubs, the Grenadier and the Town of Ramsgate, are cases in point.

An invisible hand

The Grenadier, in Belgravia's Old Barrack Yard, began life in the 18th century as an officers' mess for the Coldstream and Grenadier Guards. In the early 19th century a young subaltern, caught cheating at cards, was reputedly beaten so severely with horsewhips by his fellow officers that he died. Although documentary evidence for the incident is fragmentary, there is good reason to believe that it did take place around 1820, and that the Duke of Wellington himself was involved in the subsequent cover-up.

There is no record of the month in which the manslaughter is supposed to have taken place but, according to reports going back at least to the 1880s, it is always in September that strange happenings occur. These have included an icy coldness in the cellar, the sensation of an invisible body bumping violently into bystanders, and a variety of noises. On one occasion in the early 1970s a barman was struck by an antique military helmet that hurtled from its place on the wall; some years earlier the cellarman had been grabbed by a powerful unseen hand and pulled backwards down the cellar steps. Although admitting to its presence, the Grenadier management are reluctant to advertise their ghost, perhaps fearing that it will deter people from working there.

At the Town of Ramsgate in Wapping High Street beside the river Thames the ghost is said to be that of Lord Chief Justice George Jeffreys, the infamous 'hanging judge' who presided at the Bloody Assizes of 1685, when hundreds of people implicated in the Monmouth rebellion were executed or transported to slavery. The modern frontage of the pub dates from the 1930s, but the main

The Warren House Inn (left) on Dartmoor was reputedly once haunted by spirits of the dead bodies that were left there, pickled in brine, during the winter when the weather was too bad to carry them over the moor for burial in Moretonhampstead churchyard (right)

fabric, the landing stage and Wapping Old Stairs (leading down from the pub to the river) are at least 300 years old.

When James II fled the country in 1688, Jeffreys also tried to escape, disguised as a sailor; he was recognised and arrested on Wapping Old Stairs and taken to the Tower of London, where he died the following year before being brought to trial. Possibly the panic he felt on the steps was so strong that it became 'imprinted' on the place; but his spirit seems to have changed in appearance over the years. While many witnesses have identified the judge's grim features from contemporary portraits, others have reported seeing a cavalier in a periwig and velvet breeches, or a grey-haired old man in a long white nightshirt. Nevertheless, sightings have been reported over so many years, and by so many witnesses (including the Thames river police) that this tavern phantom deserves to be rated as genuine.

The Grenadier pub in Belgravia where a young Guards officer was supposedly whipped to death for cheating at cards. The ghostly legacy from this manslaughter includes bumps, noises and a sensation of icy coldness

If some people who have encountered the Grenadier ghost have been bruised or buffeted, many of the victims of a pub ghost in North Yorkshire have been even more unfortunate. The Busby Stoop Inn at Kirby Wiske, a village near Thirsk, takes its odd name from an 18th-century owner and his 'stoop', or tall chair. It is the chair that is haunted, or rather cursed. The disreputable Busby appears to have eked out his living by coin-clipping, thieving and receiving stolen goods; he was eventually sentenced to death for the murder of a female relative. As he was dragged from his inn, he swore that anyone who sat in his 'stoop' would die as violently and suddenly as he himself was about to do.

Simon Theakston, whose brewery owned the pub until 1978, told the author: 'The legend may be odd and vague, but it is a matter of record that in the last 200 years or so death has struck anyone who dared to sit in the chair within a very short time.' He said that many who sat in the chair were dead within days, or even hours. Eventually the chair was moved out of harm's way.

It has to be said that many of the chair's victims of the last few decades could be categorised as 'high risk' anyway. They included an RAF fighter pilot (killed the following day), a motorist (who crashed the next day and died of his injuries), a motorcyclist

The ferocious bull terrier whose stuffed head (above left) guards the bar in the Star Inn (above) at Ingatestone, Essex, died in 1914. Its ghost is said to haunt the passage leading to the bar

(killed shortly after leaving the pub), a holiday hitch-hiker (knocked down and killed two days later) and a local man in his late thirties (who died of a massive heart attack the following night). But the odds against all of them dying so soon after sitting in the Busby stoop must be high enough to suggest this was no mere coincidence.

Stories of the supernatural and 'real-life' psychical research both emphasise the adverse reactions of some animals to ghostly phenomena. The Star Inn at Ingatestone in Essex, for example, is said to be haunted by a dog that seems to appear only to other dogs. In life it was a bull terrier, which lived in the inn from about 1900 to 1914 and was a notorious fighter: it killed several neighbourhood dogs, and was never defeated. When it died of old age its stuffed head was hung in the bar parlour, and since that day its ferocious spirit has guarded the passageway giving access to the bar from the side of the pub. A former landlord said, 'The moment my dog set foot in the passage she growled, stiffened, and up went her bristles like a hedgehog. She was not only threatening something – but she was being threatened herself. She was dead scared.'

The phantom bull terrier not only continues to 'see off' its earthly kin, but also seems to deter local burglars; although pubs are a prime target in rural Essex, the Star has never had a break-in.

Perhaps the most ironic of pub hauntings is that of the Bull at Long Melford in Suffolk, a few miles from Borley and its alleged ghosts. The Bull, a 17th-century coaching inn, was used as a base by ghost hunter Harry Price during his connection with the Borley Rectory 'phenomena' (see page 1841). In 1977 the Enfield Psychical Research Group also adopted the inn as their base when they began making tape recordings in Borley Church. 'One evening,' said a member, 'we had assembled in the bar and I'd just commented that it can't have changed much since Price's time, when a cocktail shaker whizzed off the shelf and clattered to the floor. The barmaid sighed, picked it up and said to me, "Now look what you've done!" Apparently psychokinetic happenings occur there fairly regularly. Perhaps Harry resents his exposure as a fraud and is making a point!'

The cursed stoop chair at the Busby Stoop Inn, North Yorkshire. So many people who sat in the stoop died soon afterwards that eventually the brewery moved the chair out of harm's way

Cayce: the sleeper speaks

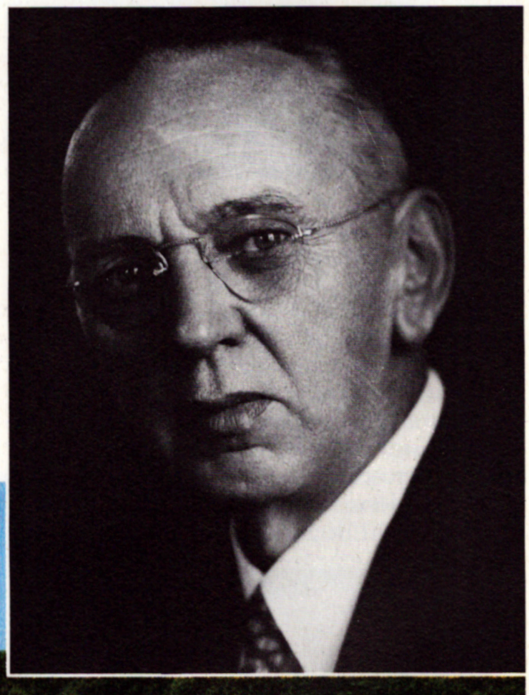
Every year, large numbers of people are cured through the writings of a psychic healer, Edgar Cayce, who died in 1945. Why does this man's work retain its power so long after his death? DAVID CHRISTIE-MURRAY investigates

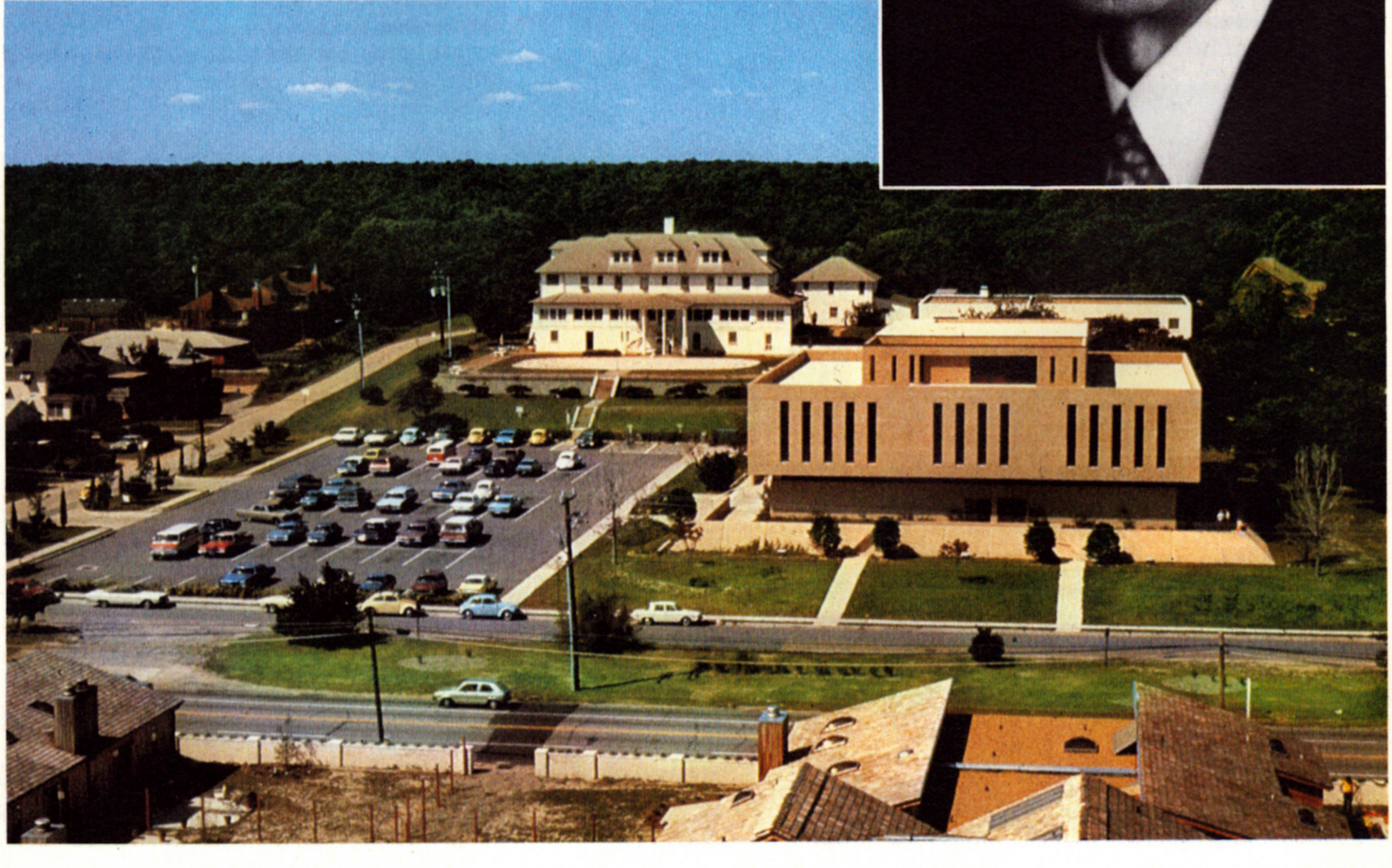
UNLIKE OTHER PSYCHIC HEALERS, whose very personal ways of curing others die with them, Edgar Cayce left a legacy of treatments and remedies still in use decades after his death in 1945. Thousands of his 'readings' – the name given to the transcriptions of what he said in trance to diagnose illnesses and prescribe for their cure – are on file and available for study at the Association for Research and Enlightenment (ARE) at Virginia Beach, Virginia, USA. But Cayce was more than a healer: he was a prophet, a clairvoyant and a theorist on reincarnation and Atlantis. His personal qualities of goodness and self-sacrifice made him beloved of his family and all who worked with him.

Cayce was born on a Kentucky farm on 18 March 1877 and was a loner as a child. He did so poorly in school that his parents despaired. Wanting to please them, he was delighted when a voice told him that help would come to him when he slept, if he promised to help the sick and afflicted. He then found that merely by sleeping with a schoolbook under his pillow, he could learn its entire contents. This made him a genius at the age of nine, but it did not make him adjust to school any better, and he left for good when he was 15 years old.

Around that time, he was struck on the base of his spine by a baseball and suffered great pain. Lying for some time in a semi-daze, he suddenly ordered his mother to prepare and apply a poultice according to his directions, which she did reluctantly. The next morning, he was completely better.

The young Edgar Cayce worked as a sales assistant for the next few years. After his marriage to Gertrude Evans, who later





Right: Edgar Cayce, healer, clairvoyant and mystic, photographed at Virginia Beach, Virginia, USA, in 1941. In 1931 he founded the Association for Research and Enlightenment (below) at Virginia Beach to further his work. More than 35 years after his death, the Association continues its research

became his most trusted associate in his healing work, he took a job as a travelling insurance salesman. While on the road in 1900, he lost his voice and spent fruitless months searching for a cure, trying orthodox doctors, chiropractors, hypnotists, anyone who might possibly be able to help.

In desperation about a year later, he agreed to consult a local amateur hypnotist, Al Layne. According to Layne, hypnotism had not worked on Cayce because he would not accept post-hypnotic suggestion. Layne came up with the idea that Cayce should make the post-hypnotic suggestion to himself while under hypnosis. It worked: Cayce diagnosed the source of his problem and cured it. He then cured Layne of a long-term ailment, again in trance. This led Layne to suggest that the two work together to cure others, but Cayce was not happy with the idea. He refused – and lost his voice. Taking this as a sign that his gift of healing was from God, he agreed to try to use it in the service of others. Thereafter he found that if he stopped his readings, or if he used his gift in any way contrary to his strong Christian tenets of right and wrong, he lost his voice or suffered severe headaches.

Distant healing

At first Layne hypnotised Cayce in the presence of those seeking his help. Later Cayce simply put himself into a trance and could treat the sick from a distance. All he needed was the name and address of the sick person. At the start of every reading he was told: 'You have before you the body of [name and address]. You will go over this body carefully, noting its condition and any parts that are ailing. You will give the cause of such ailments and suggest treatments to bring about a cure.'

Cayce replied in medical terms of which he understood nothing when in the normal state. He sometimes suggested orthodox surgery and drugs; sometimes alternative methods such as osteopathy and a particular diet. At times the remedies were extraordinary, using ingredients and formulae that had to be searched out. For example, he once prescribed the use of balsam of sulphur, which no chemist had ever heard of. But it was finally found in a defunct drug catalogue 50 years old. However extreme or simple the remedies he suggested, they were transcribed and filed, eventually at the ARE. Many have been analysed and, it is claimed, established as valid.

The young Edgar Cayce. Cayce discovered his talents as a healer when he cured himself of an illness by autosuggestion while in an hypnotic trance. Cures of other people's ailments soon followed. Cayce found, however, that he could use his gifts only for the good of other people: any attempt to reap a financial reward made him physically ill

Without telling Cayce, Layne challenged a sceptical couple to keep a record of everything they did one day in Paris, and then asked Cayce to give an account of their activities. The accounts tallied – but the incident made Cayce mistrust Layne and he decided to give up their partnership and work at something else.

He lost his voice.

Recognising that his destiny was to heal others, but unable to earn a living at it because he would not charge, Cayce compromised by giving readings only on Sundays. This did not work for long, for an article in a Kentucky newspaper in 1903 brought him a torrent of requests for help, and he increased his readings. This interfered with his job as a photographer's assistant, so he opened his own photography shop to enable him to work when he chose, and to devote the rest of his time to healing.

Cayce sometimes used his other psychic abilities. He was asked to solve a murder in Canada in 1906 by a local teacher who was interested in the case – and he helped lead the police to the murderer by clairvoyantly discovering the hiding place of the murder weapon. Through predicting the state of the stock and real estate markets, he helped a client make a financial killing – but this

Looking back at life

The archives of the Association for Research and Enlightenment contain thousands of the 'life readings' that Cayce conducted for his patients. Cayce came to believe in reincarnation, and part of his life reading technique was to examine his patients' past lives and to apply the lessons he learned from them to the present. The results could sometimes be startling.

When Grover Jansen asked Cayce for a life reading in 1939, he was a 19-year-old student who had yet to decide upon a career. Cayce's reading made up his mind for him: in a previous life, Cayce said, during the American Civil War, Jansen had worked as an army agriculturalist – and 'in the present . . . mountains and streams, the outdoors, all those activities which relate to physical prowess, have an innate, subtle influence upon the Entity [Jansen] in its choice of its dealings with others.'

In another life, Jansen had lived in the Roman Empire during its period of great expansion – and before that, in ancient Egypt. Cayce's advice to Jansen was simple: 'In those fields of conservation – whether it be of fishes in waters, birds of certain caliber, needs for food, or protection of certain portions of the land or timbers, or the better conservation of soil for certain seeds or crops – all these are the channels in which the Entity may find contentment and harmony.' On a purely practical level, Cayce advised that Jansen should aim for government work in the conservation of natural resources. This he did, finding a satisfying career as US Game Management Agent, responsible for enforcing fish and game regulations throughout an entire state.

brought on a splitting headache that underlined his conviction to use his gifts only for helping those in distress. However, against his clairvoyant 'successes' must be balanced a sharp defeat. With other psychics, he failed utterly to throw light on a crime that made international headlines in 1932: the kidnap and murder of the son of Charles Lindbergh, the aviation hero who was the first person to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean.

Once Cayce attributed blame for a railway accident to a trusted and experienced employee, and prophesied that there would be another fatal accident if he were not dismissed. Cayce's prediction was fulfilled – and the vice-president who had refused to dismiss the employee was killed in the accident. But, although he gave such precognitive readings, the 'sleeping prophet' did not trust his own prophetic powers.

Above: Edgar Cayce with his wife (centre) and secretary in court in New York facing a charge of telling fortunes. The case was dismissed on a technicality

Above: Edgar Cayce at the site of the Cayce Hospital in 1928. The building is now the headquarters of the Association for Research and Enlightenment

Precognitions, he said, were fallible because the future depended on people's free will. In foretelling geological changes in the world – which included an upheaval in North America's western region and the disappearance of most of Japan into the sea – he argued that these were not dependent on free will and therefore felt that such predictions could be trusted and would come true.

In 1909 Cayce began a long and close association with Dr Wesley Ketchum, a homoeopath with a practice in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, where Cayce then lived. Cayce diagnosed and prescribed; Ketchum carried out the treatment. Enthusiastic about Cayce's many successes, Ketchum sent a report on him to the American Society of Clinical Research in Boston, Massachusetts, in the late summer of 1910. An article in the *New York Times* followed – and Cayce was catapulted to national notoriety. He was overwhelmed with requests for help and, at last, decided to charge a modest fee in order to devote himself entirely to healing. But Cayce was not capable of commercial success, as he himself accepted. The hospital that grateful clients opened for him at Virginia Beach in 1927 had to close when the crash of 1929 brought financial ruin to his backers.

After Dr Ketchum left Kentucky, Cayce worked only with his wife, who supported him lovingly and loyally though all the vicissitudes of their life. His gifts developed further. It is claimed, for example, that he spoke fluent Italian and Spanish in trance when dealing with people of those nationalities. An important widening of Cayce's horizons came when he was consulted by Arthur Lammers, a printer who was interested in mysticism and astrology. Lammers asked the entranced Cayce to read his horoscope, and Cayce's reply that Lammers had once been a monk seemed to Lammers to

Further reading

Gina Cerminara, *Many mansions*, Neville Spearman 1967
Noel Langley, *Edgar Cayce on reincarnation*, Paperback Library (New York) 1967
Jess Stearn, *The sleeping prophet*, Frederick Muller 1974

provide evidence of reincarnation. Cayce, the man who read the Bible through once every year of his life, at first rejected any such ideas, but later reconciled them with his Christian beliefs.

Cayce also developed what came to be known as 'life-readings'. In these he suggested treatments to heal sick minds and spirits as well as bodies. To start a life-reading, the entranced psychic was told by his wife: 'You have before you [name and date of birth]. You will give the relation of this Entity to the Universe and the universal forces, giving the conditions which are as personalities, latent and exhibited, in the present life; also the former appearances on the earth plane, giving time, place and name; and that in each life which built or retarded the Entity's development.'

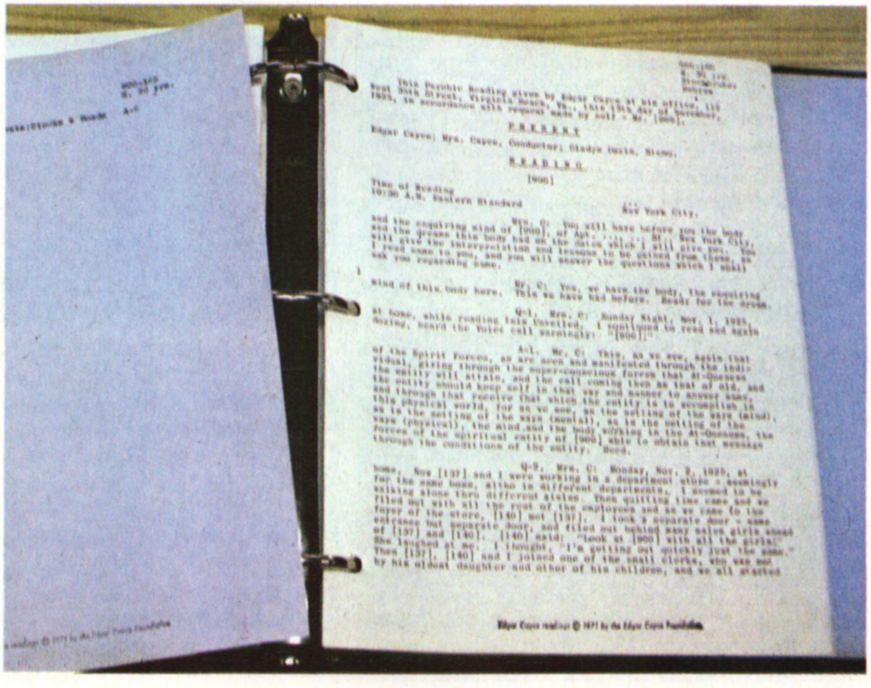
Unfulfilled destinies

Records exist at the ARE of some 2500 life-readings. Many of them are based on the doctrine of reincarnation, attributing the deficiencies of those who consulted Cayce to failures to fulfil their destinies in former existences – and advising enquirers how they could fulfil themselves in the future. The ARE files contain hundreds of letters from grateful patients who, by changing direction according to Cayce's advice, fulfilled themselves beyond their highest hopes and sometimes in completely unexpected ways.

Cayce came to believe that human beings were reincarnated in groups, appearing like shifts in a factory, and that those tied by bonds of love or hatred in previous lives were bound together – perhaps in different relationships – in succeeding existences. He traced groups from, among others, Atlantis and ancient Egypt, the contemporaries of Christ and 19th-century America.

Cayce attributed his esoteric knowledge to his ability to tap the Akashic records (see page 174). He believed that 'the conscious mind is under the subjugation of the subconscious or soul mind', and therefore can gain information from other subconscious minds or from minds in the beyond. But human minds are fallible – which could account for some of Cayce's more extreme and fantastic theories.

For it would be wrong to regard Cayce as infallible because of his well-documented successes in healing. His biographies, all by admirers, tend to fall into this trap, offering somewhat specious excuses as to why he was wrong in, for example, the Lindbergh case. It would be equally unfair to judge him by some of the sensational books about him, and by attacks such as that by the 'professional sceptic' James Randi. In his article 'Edgar Cayce – the slipping prophet' (a parody of Jess Stearn's biography *The sleeping prophet*) Randi rightly pulls no punches in demonstrating Cayce's failure in the Lindbergh case, but he consistently ignores his many clairvoyant successes on record.



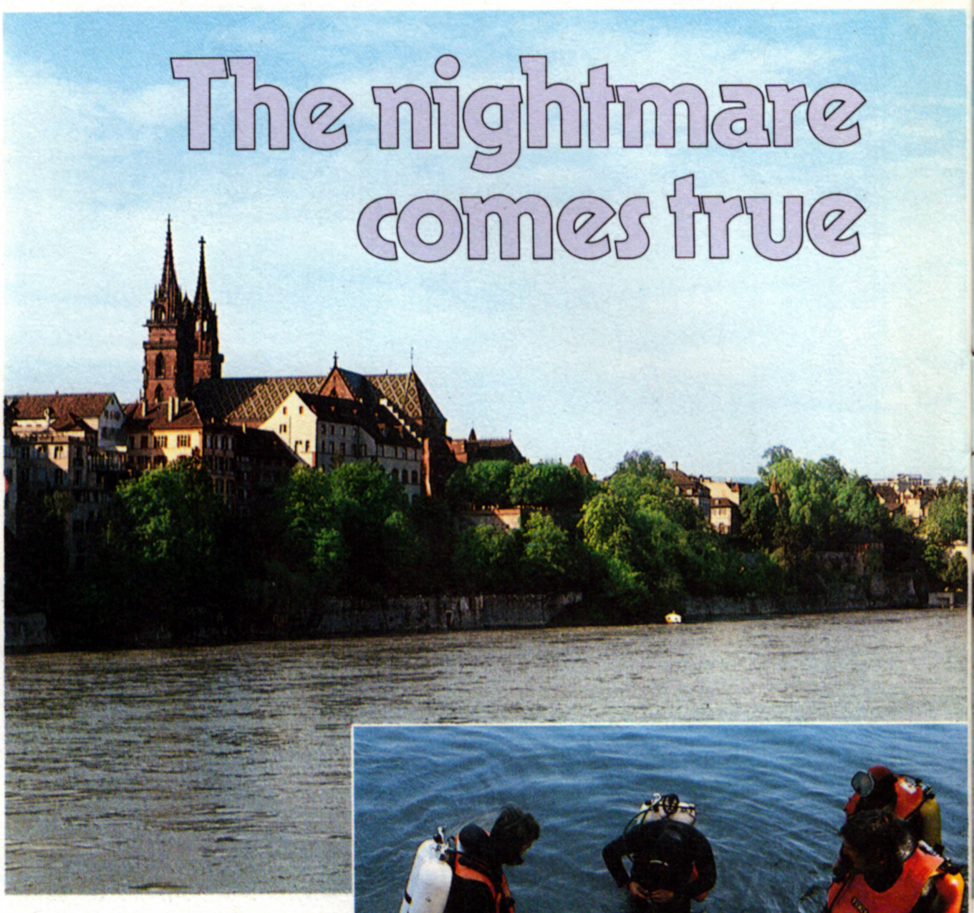
Top: part of the Cayce archives at the Association for Research and Enlightenment. The files contain thousands of the 'life readings' (above) that Cayce carried out for his patients. In a trance state, Cayce would visualise the state of health of his patient – and suggest a cure for any illness that he perceived

In judging Cayce, two considerations have to be taken into account. One is that, so far as is known, nobody has questioned his integrity. If he was mistaken in his beliefs, those beliefs were sincere and not the machinations of a hypocrite. Financial advantage was never a motive for Cayce and he remained poor for the greater part of his life. He exhausted himself and died by giving too many readings for the distressed during the Second World War. And the affection and respect expressed by people who knew and worked with him tell of an exceptional human being.

The second consideration is that he willingly and deliberately left the records of his life's work on file at the ARE, which was established in 1931. They are open for research – and use, if desired. The good he did has not been 'interred with his bones' but is still available to succeeding generations.

The nightmare comes true

The involvement of dowser Edgar Devaux gave a new twist to the case of Johanna Bravant and her missing sister Mina. COLIN GODMAN and LINDSAY ST CLAIRE reveal how Devaux first divined that Mina was dead – then pinpointed the location of her body



Above: the Rhine at Basle which, according to the dowser Edgar Devaux, was the watery grave of Mina Segner. A team of divers (right) searched the stretch of river indicated by Devaux – and found a stocking and a sandal that belonged, it seemed, to the missing woman

WHEN MINA SEGNER, the wife of a Swiss garage proprietor, went missing from her home in Augst, near Basle, on 19 May 1960, her sister Johanna Bravant turned to a dowser for help. Using a map and his pendulum, Edgar Devaux told her at once that Mina was dead – and predicted that her body would be found in the Rhine at Schweizerhalle, just east of Basle.

On 29 May Johanna and her husband René, accompanied by a police officer and members of a local subaqua club, went down to the river. The team dived all morning, but the search proved fruitless. Then, at 4.30 p.m., a young diver surfaced in a rush, shocked and spluttering. He tore off his mask; in his hand he held a stocking. He had touched something, he said, something horrible. It was a body and as he touched it it seemed to move away into the current, leaving the stocking in his grasp.

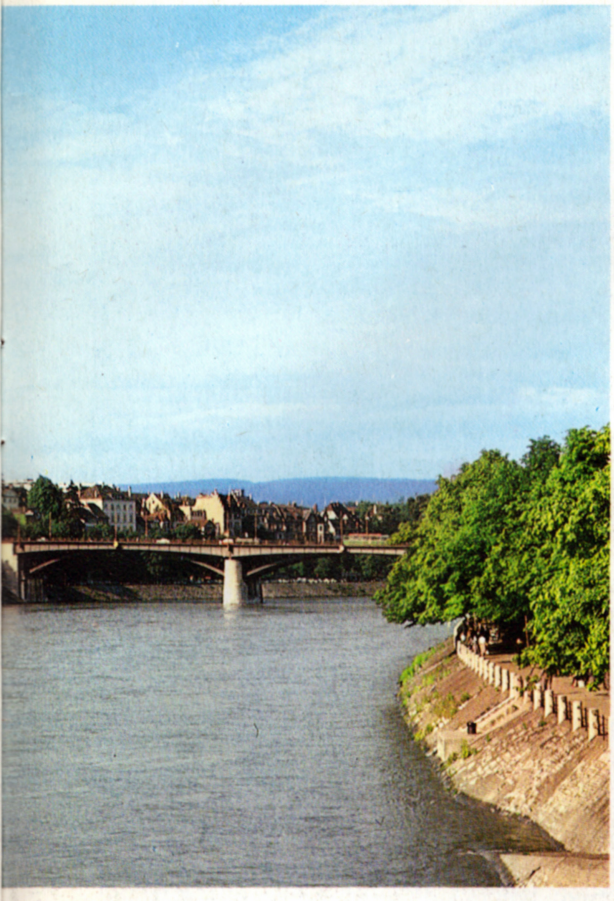
The divers' leader Hans Engler took the stocking to Johanna. Could this have been her sister's? She had to say yes; Mina had certainly worn stockings of that type – but then so did thousands of women in Basle. Suddenly something broke surface and began to float away. It was a woman's sandal. This time Johanna was in no doubt: it was Mina's. Devaux's prediction was proving terrifyingly accurate.

The divers probed the river bed, but Hans Engler argued that the body must have moved downstream. Devaux used his pendulum again. With his free hand stretched out over the water, he walked slowly along the bank. Yes, he was sure, Mina's body had passed this way. The diver who had touched the body was taken away, too ill to continue, but the others followed Devaux along the river bank. The diving was abandoned when the docks and industrial buildings that sprawl along the Rhine blocked their path.

Johanna was shocked by the discovery of the sandal and was urged to rest in the nearby café. Soon she learned that the police wanted her to return to Mina's husband Bernard at Augst to await news. This she did, accompanied by René. Within an hour the telephone rang to summon Bernard Segner and the Bravants. Something had been found, and they were to go to the mortuary at Birsfelden.

The body had completed its grim journey, travelling two and a half miles (4 kilometres) to the hydro-electric barrage across the river at Birsfelden. Almost 325 yards (300 metres) long, the huge structure houses control gates and the generating hall, which stands over four great turbines. Before plunging down to the turbine blades the Rhine water flows through massive steel inlet grills. They protect the machinery from floating debris or drifting river craft. The flotsam that builds up against the grill is regularly raked up by a heavy grab, which drops its contents into a gully at the top of the barrage.

Adolf Jegge-Meier was in the control room when a workman reported a body in the river at 5 p.m. The police had asked the staff at the power station to watch the water after the divers' discovery. The workman said he could not touch the body. It was too horrible, he said, and it was not his job. Jegge-Meier used the grab to lift the corpse out of the water. The police were told and duly arrived with a doctor and an official from the public prosecutor's department, but their initial examination merely confirmed that the body had been in the water for at least 10 days.



The corpse was removed from the power station. At 7 p.m. the Bravants accompanied Mina's husband to the mortuary. It was a small bleak building, since demolished, and the family waited nervously until an official ushered them in. Johanna stepped forward cautiously into the room – and suddenly she was back in her dream.

There she stood, flanked by René and Mina's husband, looking down on what seemed, at first sight, to be a cattle trough. The corpse that lay in front of them was not in a wooden coffin but had been put in a trough of galvanised metal. There lay a woman, her legs apart. There was some water in the coffin, water gruesomely discoloured by blood seeping from a post-mortem wound. It was exactly the pinkish colour that Johanna had shrunk from in her dream. The water had run out of the woman's sodden clothes and, sure enough, the dress she was wearing had been Johanna's. The corpse was that of her poor, confused sister, wearing the dress she had been given by Johanna some weeks earlier.

The inquest on Mina Segner returned an open verdict. Identification was confirmed by Mina's teeth and her wedding ring. No criminal proceedings were considered appropriate as there was no evidence to suggest how Mina met her death.

The authors examined the river bank behind the Segners' garage: concrete steps lead straight into the water, and elsewhere slabs of slippery concrete slope gently into the Rhine. Someone 'taking the air', as René Bravant suggested, might well have lost their footing and slipped into the cold water. No one will ever know.

The mysteries that accompany this family tragedy are harder to solve. Why should Johanna experience such an uncanny premonition of Mina's death?

The trouble with precognitive dreams is their inherent weakness as evidence. Professor Hans Bender, the parapsychologist who drew the case to the authors' attention, has three rules for such cases. First, the precognition must be reported in some way before its fulfilment. Second, there must be enough significant detail in the account to enable the predicted events to be identified. Third, and no less important, it must be possible to rule out any conscious or unconscious attempts to force the dream to come true.

In Bender's view the Johanna Bravant

As Devaux had predicted, Mina's body was discovered in the Rhine. The corpse was stopped by the dam across the river at Birsfelden power station (below) and was removed from the water by Adolf Jegge-Meier (below left). When Johanna Bravant went to the mortuary she realised the full significance of the terrible nightmare she had had some weeks before: just as in her dream, she found herself staring down at the corpse of a woman; it was wearing one of Johanna's own dresses and lying in a puddle of pinkish coloured water in what appeared to be a cattle trough

Two steps ahead

As a footnote to her case Johanna Bravant recalled a visit to a concert some time before her fateful dream. She met a friendly woman from Vienna who, over coffee afterwards, told her she was psychic. To Johanna's surprise, she was told that her marriage to René was unhappy and that she would soon divorce. She could look forward to a second and very happy marriage to a friend she had known for a long time. The Viennese woman added that she would be taken to live in a large house with twin staircases.

Johanna rejected the story as nonsense but was forced to remember the meeting when all the points were fulfilled three years later. She had divorced René and married a wealthy friend, Max Frölicher. She was taken to his family home (left) near Konolfingen in the canton of Berne. It was an unusually large house – with twin staircases.

case satisfies all three points. The dream was so distressing that Johanna lost little time in telling René and Erik Kellner, the head waiter at their restaurant. The second rule is satisfied by the wealth of detail in the dream: a woman in pink-tinged water, legs apart, wearing a specific dress known to the dreamer. Having examined the coffin at Birsfelden the authors can confirm that it does look like a cattle trough, just as in Johanna's dream. As to the third and final rule, it is hard to see how Johanna could have contributed to the awful outcome of her dream. Certainly when she moved to Lake Geneva Johanna was concerned about leaving Mina behind, knowing that her marriage was far from happy and that her mental and physical health was poor, but she could hardly have envisaged such a tragic conclusion.

A sense of fear

However, her anxiety about her sister may have helped Edgar Devaux and contributed to his success. Johanna had noticed that Mina had left her clothes and money behind at Augst, and that worried her. Before Johanna's telephone call Devaux had not known about Mina Segner's disappearance. He lived beyond the range of the radio appeal broadcast by the police, but he would have immediately sensed Johanna's fears.

When the authors talked to Devaux they found him completely confident. His work with the pendulum had produced some remarkable successes. When seeking living targets he preferred to work at night when they would be asleep and motionless. The dead were similarly easy to dowse, and he claimed he had been instrumental in finding his own son who had drowned in a Swiss lake. Had he had doubts about Mina's condition? No, he replied. Had she been alive and well the pendulum would have swung from side to side. Had she been ill it would have swung in the opposite direction. But on 23 May, when Johanna consulted him, it had swung diagonally (north-east to south-west) and that, for Devaux, could be interpreted in only one way: death.

Parapsychologists are satisfied that the movement of a pendulum merely amplifies the tiny and unconscious muscular changes in the dowser's hands and arms. So what was Devaux sensing? Was he reading Johanna's unspoken anxiety, or receiving paranormal information about the corpse's whereabouts?

Could the whole case be attributed to anything other than an extraordinary series of coincidences? Only four or five people are drowned every year in that particular stretch of the Rhine between Augst and Birsfelden. To fulfil the dream Mina had to be recovered from the power station at Birsfelden. Had she not, she would not have been taken to the little mortuary where they use such an unusual coffin for the dead from the river.

As for Devaux's success, the length of river in question is no less than 4 miles (6.5 kilometres), yet he chose exactly the right 60 feet (20 metres) to search. Hans Bender suggested that Devaux's result could be attributed to his having entered the strong emotional 'field' generated by Johanna Bravant and her family. Such a field, Bender argues, is essential for the display of paranormal phenomena. The powerful feelings of despair and guilt combined to contribute the sympathetic conditions for Devaux's success and Johanna's living nightmare.

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was no reason why the two theories should not co-exist quite happily, he put the case for a dispassionate evaluation of the data, warning against the danger of what might be called 'arguing by anecdote': when we argue passionately, he said, 'we often lose sight of the need for multiple case data and use only one or two cases as "evidence" to support a contention.' He stressed the need to examine apparition cases systematically – only systematic analysis of a number of cases, after all, could enable us to answer questions as to the nature of apparitions.

This robustly rational approach to a contentious area of psychical research contrasted interestingly with a talk given earlier in the week by Brian Inglis, a consultant to *The Unexplained*. He introduced the concept of 'retrocognitive dissonance', adapted from the term 'cognitive dissonance' first used by L. Festinger in 1957. When we are compelled by circumstances to hold two contradictory views, Festinger said, a state of tension is set up within us. We release the tension as soon as we can by finding rationalisations for rejecting the point of view we are less attached to. Inglis himself gave a simple example of a line of argument that runs something like this:

> I have just seen X bend a spoon, though I am sure he was not applying any physical force. But spoons do not bend unless physical force is applied. But, ah! there's that conjuror who has done it. So it *was* sleight-of-hand, after all.

Some may feel that to keep one's mind open to this kind of scepticism is less than harmful. But Inglis had in mind another kind of scepticism – one brought on, it seemed, by the mere passage of time. It is this that he called 'retrocognitive dissonance', taking as a striking example Charles Richet's recollections of his early investigations of Eusapia Palladino:

> At the moment when these facts take place they seem to us certain, and we are willing to proclaim them openly. But when we feel the irresistible influence of our environment, when our friends all laugh at our credulity – then we are almost disarmed, and begin to doubt. May I not have been grossly deceived . . .? And we end up by letting ourselves be persuaded that we have been the victims of a trick.

Understandably, Inglis went on to complain that 'For those of us whose chief interest is in the historical evidence for psi, retrocognitive dissonance is an unmitigated nuisance.' One obvious way out of the difficulty of retrocognitive dissonance is to insist that only first-hand evidence, and fresh at that, is acceptable; but this is obviously impracticable, and nowhere more so than in the examination of historical evidence.

Researchers cannot experience the events in question themselves; they cannot step back in time to question witnesses, or subject physical phenomena to examination with modern scientific instruments. And there is a further difficulty: an over-sceptical examination of the evidence may, at a distance of years, end by destroying what may once have been a perfectly reasonable case.

Some may feel that Inglis goes a little too far in apparently placing historical evidence beyond the reach of any rational criticism: speaking of the evidence for the talents of the physical medium Eva C. (see page 2134), he commented: 'it has to be said that even if the ectoplasm had a "St Michael" or a "Brooks Brothers" label, though it would be grounds for suspicion, it would not be proof of fraud.' Quite so – but neither is it proof that it is genuine.

Inglis went on to extend his argument in the pages of an issue of the *Spectator* (11 September 1982). Criticising what he feels to be a too sceptical approach to paranormal phenomena in the SPR, he commented that this attitude 'leads to severe tensions within the SPR and PA, as they strive desperately to find ways to produce findings which will satisfy orthodox scientists'.

Discouragement of the sensitive

Inglis quoted a letter from Alfred Russel to an acquaintance who, in the 1890s, was thinking of joining the SPR. The society, said Russel, was a body

> for the suppression of facts, for the wholesale imputation of imposture, for the discouragement of the sensitive, and the repudiation of every revelation of the kind pressing itself upon humanity from the regions of light and knowledge.

The society, Inglis implied, had not changed very much in this respect. Parapsychological research, as several distinguished speakers urged passionately at Cambridge, stands in need of organisation: again and again it was argued that individual researchers should communicate their results to each other, and that their experiments should be made directly comparable. But, as Brian Inglis pointed out in his *Spectator* piece, there is no virtue in making a hobby of exposures. He quoted an observation of G.K. Chesterton's Father Brown: 'The sort of man who brags about having "shown up" sham magicians or poor quacks of any sort . . . . I dare say it might sometimes be a painful duty. It's an uncommonly base pleasure.'

Haunted by the past

A poll conducted in Britain by Audience Selection in 1980 concluded that 'one in seven adults (14%) say that they have either seen, heard or been haunted by a ghost'; and a Gallup poll conducted two years later put the figure at 9%. Clearly public interest in ghosts and apparitions is high – as the number of letters describing ghost sightings that we receive in THE UNEXPLAINED offices indicates – but for some reason the subject has been curiously neglected in recent years by professional parapsycholoists. There was much discussion at this year's centenary conference of the Society for Psychical Research about why this should be so – and what new directions of research could be found.

It was curiously apt that the subject of apparition research should have been aired so extensively as part of the centenary celebrations of the Society of Psychical Research. As George Zorab pointed out in a talk entitled 'The forlorn quest', a large proportion of the founder members of the SPR were Spiritualists who were concerned to have phenomena of the seance room examined by the impartial eye of science. If ghosts, spirits and apparitions could be proved to have an objective existence then perhaps it would be possible to believe – in the teeth of the materialist view of life that scientists were propounding – that, as Zorab put it, 'man was a spiritual entity capable of surviving the shock of death and go on existing to all eternity.' That this was indeed the way in which many of the early psychical researchers were thinking is confirmed by a passage from a letter, dated 3 December 1869, from Frederic Myers to Professor Henry Sidgwick. Myers asked him:

> almost with trembling, whether he thought that when Tradition, Intuition, Metaphysic, had failed to solve the riddle of the Universe, there was still a chance that from any actual observable phenomena – ghosts, spirits or whatsoever there might be – some valid knowledge might be drawn as to a world Unseen?

Experimental confirmation of the existence of a non-material component of the world came in 1876 when W.F. Barrett – later Sir William Barrett – described his experiments with a servant girl who, under hypnosis, could be mentally 'sent' to places she had never visited, and describe them accurately. This worked, however, only with places with which Barrett himself was familiar; clearly the girl was deriving her information from Barrett's mind by telepathy. This result, Zorab pointed out, 'raised the hopes of those who were seeking for scientifically based evidence of man's spiritual nature'.

But what of the evidence for survival? Barrett was one of the first in England to suggest that its interpretation was by no means a simple matter:

> before we could hope to arrive at any definite conclusion as to the origins of spiritualistic phenomena, we must ascertain whether such a thing as the transfusion of thought between sitter and medium really existed, and its extent; and secondly, whether such a thing as clairvoyance or a transcendental perceptive power had any foundation in fact?

This was written in 1876. More than 40 years later, he was to declare: 'Both these questions have been answered in the affirmative, and this renders the above caution the more necessary.'

The difficulty, of course, is obvious: if you accept the reality of telepathy and clairvoyance, there are two possible explanations for the occurrence of any apparition or Spiritualist phenomenon. As Karlis Osis pointed out in his Cambridge lecture, 'After one hundred years: the time for a change in apparition research':

> Two basic theories . . . have competed for dominance in the field for nearly one hundred years: the 'ESP' theory', which states that such experiences are hallucinations formed on the basis of information received through ESP; the 'presence' theory', which contends that in at least some apparition cases there is an external presence that invades the surrounds of the percipient.

In other words, any apparition that can be explained as some kind of independent being – a 'nonphysical personal agency', in a neat phrase coined by another contributor, T.N.E. Greville of the Psychical Research Foundation – can equally well be explained as a kind of dramatisation of information obtained by clairvoyance or telepathy.

It is the competition between these alternative views of the origins of apparitions, Karlis Osis argued, that has led to the stagnation of apparitional research. Pointing out that there

continued overleaf